



### Life Course

Childhood Risk Factor

### Brief Name

ACE: Witnessed Domestic Violence

### Indicator

Percent of children witnessing domestic violence.

### Description

This is a proxy measure for toxic stress and is included as an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE). This question asks parents, *"Did [child's name] ever see or hear any parents, guardians, or any other adults in his/her home slap, hit, kick, punch, or beat each other up?"*

### WI

6.8%

### US

7.3%

### Best

5%

### Worst

11.1%

CT

OK

### Year

2011/2012

### Numerator

Number of children who experienced the ACE

### Denominator

Children aged 0-17

### Importance

Witnessing violence has been linked to increased psychological distress, increased mental health issues (Kitzmann, 2003), and an increased likelihood of the young person committing acts of violence (Howarth, 2013). Children who witness domestic abuse have outcomes similar to children who were physically abused themselves (Kitzmann, 2003).

### Limitations

The National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) is completed by the parent or caregiver who may be unable or unwilling to acknowledge early negative childhood experiences. This question may be under-reported due to the victim's disempowerment or concern that a disclosure may compromise the family's safety. Data from other national surveys such as the National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence (NatSCEV), which uses child self-report data, find that almost a quarter of children witnessed violence in their homes, schools, or communities (Wolak, 1998).

### Source

NSCH 2011/12. Data query from the Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative, Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health website. Retrieved from [www.childhealthdata.org](http://www.childhealthdata.org). Kitzmann et. al. Child Witness to Domestic Violence: A Meta-Analytic Review. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 71.2 (2003). Howarth, Emma, and Gene Feder. "Prevalence and physical health impact of domestic violence." Domestic violence and mental health. London: RCPsych Publications (2013): 1-17. Wolak J, et al. "Effects of Partner Violence on Children." In "Partner violence: A comprehensive review of 20 years of research." Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. (1998)